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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/977,629	10/15/2001	William R. Brown	00216-551001 / OB-199	2551

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EXAMINER
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WALSH, JOHN B

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3676

DATE MAILED: 10/04/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

# Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/977,629

Applicant(s)

BROWN ET AL.

Examiner

John B. Walsh

Art Unit

3676

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 September 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-48 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 18, 19 and 40-43 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17, 20-39 and 44-48 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

## Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 6.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102*

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 1, 2, 8, 17, 20-22, 28, 37 and 44-48 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,815,874 to Weihrauch.

Weihrauch '874 discloses a grip (1) to a handle; the grip comprising a core (figure 5; core of 1) and a sheath (figure 5; outer sheath of 1) surrounding the core; the sheath having a hardness greater than the core (sheath is harder than the core since the core comprises a foaming agent).

As concerns claims 2, 8, 22 and 28, the core and the sheath are an elastomeric material (column 4, line 27).

As concerns claims 17 and 37, the personal care product is a toothbrush (figure 1).

As concerns claim 44, injecting gas into the middle of the first layer (gas injected with foaming agent).

As concerns claim 45, a hollow core (hollow core defined by foaming agent forming a hollow space).

As concerns claim 46, a foaming agent (column 4, line 16).

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 3-7, 9-16, 23-27, 29-36, 38 and 39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,815,874 to Weihrauch as applied above.

As concerns claims 3, 4, 9, 10, 23, 24, 29 and 30 Weihrauch '874 does not explicitly disclose the elastomeric material is a thermoplastic elastomer. However, Weihrauch '874 does teach using thermoplastic elastomer for toothbrushes (column 1, line 36). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide a thermoplastic elastomer selected as thermoplastics vulcanates, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. *In re Leshin*, 125 USPQ 416.

As concerns claims 5-7 and 25-27 Weihrauch '874 does not explicitly recite the core having a hardness less than 50 Shore A, 25 Shore A or 10 Shore A, however it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the above hardness values, since it has been held that discovering an optimum value of a result effective variable involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Boesch*, 617 F.2d 272, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980).

Art Unit: 3676

As concerns claims 11-13 and 31-33 Weihrauch '874 does not explicitly disclose the thickness of the sheath. However, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide different thicknesses as a matter of obvious design choice.

As concerns claim 14-16 and 34-36 Weihrauch '874 does not explicitly recite the core having a hardness of approximately 25 to 80 Shore A, however it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the above range of hardness values, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233.

As concerns claims 38 and 39, it has been held that a recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus satisfying the claimed structural limitations. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1647 (1987).

### ***Conclusion***

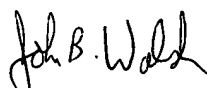
5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John B. Walsh whose telephone number is 703-305-0444. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 8:30-6:00.

Art Unit: 3676

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Anthony Knight can be reached on 703-308-3179. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-872-9325.



John B. Walsh  
Patent Examiner  
Technology Center 3670